15 JUL 1980

William H. Webster, Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Typed 7/8/80
RLK:LL:JIF:gvr

Robert L. Keuch
Special Counsel to the Attorney General

John F. Kennedy Autopsy Photographs

Reference is made to my memorandum to you dated February 20, 1980, and to an FBI report dated March 18, 1980 from the Washington, D.C., Field Office and entitled UNSUB(S), Possible Theft of John F. Kennedy Autopsy Photographs, regarding the investigation of an alleged theft of John F. Kennedy autopsy photographs. You may recall that former Chief Counsel and Staff Director of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Assassinations, G. Robert Blakey, informed the Criminal Division that [redacted] 7C acting through [redacted] 7C was attempting to sell "original" autopsy photographs to the media. Blakey further indicated that representations were made during the attempted transactions that the photographs exhibited evidence of tampering.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was requested to initiate an inquiry into the allegations of Mr. Blakey. The Bureau was also instructed to investigate Committee handling of the autopsy photographs to determine: 1) whether any original autopsy photographs are missing; 2) whether authorized copies of the original autopsy photographs are missing; 3) whether unauthorized copies of the original photographs could have been made without the knowledge of the Committee; and 4) whether all of the private consultants who had access to autopsy photographs were contractually barred from creating "unauthorized" copies.

The FBI was instructed not to interview [redacted] 7C in compliance with Department of Justice policy regarding the questioning of reporters which policy is enumerated at 1-5.420 of the United States Attorneys' Manual (Ch. 5, p.28) and at Title 28, C.F.R. § 50.10(f)-(k). The FBI investigation revealed that: 1) all original autopsy photographs remain in the possession of the National Archives; 2) all authorized copies of autopsy photos were returned to the Committee; 3) numerous opportunities existed for Committee staff members and other persons, including private consultants, to make unauthorized ("third-generation") copies of the Committee's authorized "second-generation" autopsy photograph copies;

cc: Records
General Litigation
Mr. Fogel (2)
Mr. Cubbage Mr. Keuch

[redacted] [redacted]

2585

and 4) it is unlikely, though possible, that anyone making unauthorized copies of the Committee's authorized autopsy photograph copies did so under a false belief that such conduct was permissible.

The FBI interview of [redacted] 7C [redacted] The Attorney General has denied authorization for an FBI interview of [redacted] 7C

Since sufficient evidence of numerous opportunities to make unauthorized "third-generation" copies was discovered by the FBI, we are convinced that the source of the pictures now offered for sale cannot be identified through the investigation of all persons who had possession of authorized copies. Accordingly, no viable alternative methods of investigation of this matter appear to exist.

Unless new evidence of a theft of government property violation develops, no further investigation is requested. In the event that the FBI discovers commercial publication of the JFK autopsy photos in the future, please notify the Criminal Division, to permit review of the decision not to interview [redacted] 7C

Please feel free to instruct your staff to contact Mr. Roger Cubbage (724-6893) or Mr. Jeffrey Fogel (724-7526) of the Criminal Division if they have any questions regarding this matter.

[redacted] [redacted]